

34 THE CUBEO

361
554
[157]
[123] Caño dwellers are self-conscious; they entertain less and are reluctant to have visitors. I was never invited or encouraged to visit a caño dwelling house. I was always told that they did not care to have visitors.

842
361
622
768 When a headman dies his house is ordinarily abandoned and the new headman undertakes to build a new maloca, since one requirement of the office is his ability to enlist his sibmates in working with him. Abandonment of a house, however, changes mainly the outlines of the clearing if a new site is chosen for the new maloca. A new maloca may be built alongside the old, in which case there is no change at all. Sometimes the new headman decides that the old site was the victim of evil forces and a new clearing is built. But against such a fear is the desire not to abandon still-productive manioc plantations. At all events, a new clearing is normally close enough to the old to ease the transition from last harvest to new harvest. When a site is moved the last harvest is drawn from the old, and cuttings from the old *chagra* (plantation) are planted in the new. Thus there is a transitional period when the community is actually working both clearings. The Cubeo regard this transition period as a difficult one; and until they are drawing a bitter manioc harvest from the new clearing they will be too preoccupied to hold drinking parties. Fruit trees on the old *chagra* are harvested as long as they bear fruit.

361
[31] The extent of a community's territory is such that it will be able to circulate within it more or less permanently, reoccupying after some 15 years land that has become reforested and so workable again. Boundaries are along a river only. Past the line of cultivation the forest is an undifferentiated darkness.

[173] The traditions of the Cubeo indicate that they were originally dwellers along the Vaupés, the main stream, and that they later moved up the smaller tributaries such as the Cuduiari and the Querari. The present distribution of sibs is also interesting in this connection in that high-ranking sibs live along the main stream or along the mouths of the tributaries, whereas the lower-ranking sibs occupy the headwaters of smaller streams. Sib status is definitely associated with location along a river. The back reaches of creeks deep in the forests are the refuge of the weak, whereas the strong occupy a stretch of river that has majesty either by sweep of water or by the character of its rapids. The main site of a sib that has become dispersed is always in a conspicuous part of a river whereas Satellites and Independents often move up small creeks. Father Antonio Giaccone of the Salesian Mission has observed that the Tucano (referring to the tribe) never constructed their malocas in creeks but only along the main river. Occupying the main streams, he noted, they

361
554

CUBEO

42

THE CUBEO

342 cloth baskets, and calabash bowls in which the people keep their small
353 possessions. Most houses have a flooring above the main supporting
beams to provide storage space for farinha.

342 Malocas are commonly decorated. The front walls at the narrow
353 end are painted with representations of bark-cloth masks that are
531 used in funeral ceremonies, while the interior posts flanking the
532 dance floor receive geometric designs. The *Bahikiwa*, whose ancestry
[64] may have been that of the more primitive Macú, do not decorate
[184] their houses. The bark-cloth mask designs depict spirit beings, and
while their representations on house walls have no specific magical
function they do convey to householders the atmosphere of contact
with friendly beings. Similar representations are common as petro-
glyphs. The geometric designs on the house posts are similar to those
on dancing tubes, and portray simply an atmosphere of ceremonial
gaiety.

342 Ordinary cooking is done over the household hearth, and simple
252 meals are eaten around it. Manioc is prepared at the rear end of the
central corridor, where the women wait their turn to share the large
communal manioc oven, a circular ceramic plate on pottery supports,
[264] that has been provided by the headman's wife. Most evening meals
are eaten communally in the central corridor.

342 Allocation of space in the maloca follows no precise order of
554 status, but as a rule older and socially less active households occupy
the rear compartments near the kitchen area, while a headman pre-
fers a central location on either side.

342 At night a fire is kept going at the center of each compartment, and
354 on chilly nights the occupants vie for the comfort of the space just
[513] above the fire. The people sleep fitfully. Someone is always up to tend
[512] the fire and to crouch over it for extra warmth. The day begins several
hours before dawn and ends several hours after nightfall.

THE FACTOR OF CORESIDENCE

621 While community and sib are normally coextensive insofar as their
614 male occupants are concerned, there are, nevertheless, permanent
591 male residents of alien sibs in many communities. Widows, for ex-
• [76] ample, return to the parental community with their children. There
are some cases of matrilocal residence as well. These exceptional but
not rare cases provide information on the role of coresidence in regu-
lating social behavior. The question of coresidence is of special in-
terest in the Northwest Amazon region because among tribes that do
not have sibs but are organized on the basis of patrilocal families it is

- 423 The phratry, with its extension of kinship along a large section of
 615 river, provides for amicable settlements of boundary disputes; these
 [578] arise, however, over river use only, never over cultivated land. There
 is no thought more repugnant to the Cubeo than that one should
 cultivate land that has been cleared by another. When a woman dies
 • [768] her manioc plots are left to be grown over after the mature tubers
 have been harvested, so strongly do the people feel about the intimate
 relationship between land and its cultivator.
- 241 Within the sib territory, male household heads arrive at individual
 614 or, more often, joint decisions as to the total clearing and the alloca-
 361 tion of household manioc plots within it. An individual may select
 any part of the sib territory for a clearing, although by tradition and
 for reasons of convenience the plots are contiguous and the clearing
 241 is one large space. Preparation of a clearing is most often a collective
 614 effort supervised by the headman. Even as they begin to prepare a
 361 clearing the household heads discuss their individual allocations and
 622 stake out a location. There are two ways in which the cultivation of
 476 a clearing can be organized. The preferred way is for the headman
 to organize a collective work party, including all household heads.
 If this cannot be arranged, either because of lack of agreement about
 a joint move or because some male household heads are away in the
 rubber forests or in some other work, the move is made gradually.
 Then the headman and his close associates are the first to move to
 the new location. They start the clearing by preparing their own plots,
 establishing a bridgehead, so to speak, for the rest of the sib. This
 method of moving over to a new location indicates how little anxiety
 the Cubeo feel about getting a choice location. When the later ar-
 rivals come they can count upon help from the headman and the
 earlier settlers in preparing their own clearings. The general clearing
 begins initially as a narrow semicircular band so that each plot is
 about the same distance from the house. The band is then widened
 by each household in accordance with its needs for new land. An-
 nually, during the short dry seasons, a household head and the other
 adult males cut down and burn over the timber, outward from the
chagra, to extend the cultivations. Manioc can be harvested at from
 six to 24 months. A providential family allocates one section of a field
 for a two-year harvest.
- 244 A manioc cultivation is always spoken of as belonging to a woman.
 423 A woman says, "This *chagra* was made for me by my husband" (or
 "my son" or "my brother"). She is the sole administrator of the plan-
 tation and may assign sections of it to her daughters, to her daugh-
 ters-in-law, and to guests who have come for an extended visit. The